

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 08239812 8



IN

(William)

H







Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2008 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation







THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.  
1897.



C. C. del.

T. Moore's Lith.

*The young man of whom Moore and Williams was the great grand son of Roger William*

THE SPIRIT

OF

ROGER WILLIAMS,

WITH

A PORTRAIT

OF

ONE OF HIS DESCENDANTS.

---

“ He was a man of spirit true and bold :  
Feared not to speak his thoughts whate'er they were.”—*Durfee.*

---

BY

LORENZO D. JOHNSON.

---

BOSTON:  
PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR,  
BY CASSADY AND MARCH....WILSON LANE.

1839.

178



---

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1839, by  
LORENZO D. JOHNSON,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Massachusetts.

---

NOV 20 1887  
NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

TO THE  
ROGER WILLIAMS CHURCH,  
AND CONGREGATION,

*With which we have recently dissolved our connexion as  
Pastor, in the mutual enjoyment, we believe, of undying  
friendship and brotherly love, and with the hope that  
they and every other Christian Church, will yet  
govern themselves, by the "test of fellow-  
ship" vindicated in these pages,*

IS THIS LITTLE VOLUME RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED, BY  
THE AUTHOR.



## P R E F A C E .

---

THIS unpretending little volume, it is hoped, will not prove altogether uninteresting to those who may favor the author with its perusal. Should it fall into the hands of the rigorous sectary, he will doubtless be induced to pass the sentence of condemnation on the writer's views of Christian liberty, and what he considers the only true test of Christian fellowship. But such are respectfully invited to lay aside prejudice, at least for a time, and carefully to compare those views with the precepts and practice of Christ and his Apostles, and then, honestly, and with the true Christian spirit, determine, whether those views be not more consistent with the true spirit of religion, with the welfare and prosperity of the church, and the present and future happiness of mankind, than that system which is narrowed to a single point, and excludes from fellowship and communion, for one supposed error in judgment, the person whose heart may be right. To those whose views agree with those of the writer, he has only to say, that no effort has been made at embellishment; the only object being, to promote the cause of truth and righteousness, and to stimulate others to co-operate in the great and glorious work.

In the biographical sketch of ROGER WILLIAMS, for which, in the multiplicity of other concerns, the author is mostly indebted to the labors of another person, nothing has been attempted beyond a brief summary; which, concise as it is, embraces, in a plain and familiar manner, all the leading and most prominent incidents of that great man's long and useful life, known in history. It is the substance of larger volumes, detached from statistical accounts, and incidental circumstances, connected with colonial history, and biographies of other men. It shows ROGER WILLIAMS up, as he was seen in his own day, standing, in relation to other men, independent and alone; and will prove a valuable acquisition to such as cannot afford to possess more expensive works, or to wade through a large mass of matter, to come at a comparatively few simple facts. In the appendix, a few notes are thrown together, which, it is hoped, may prove acceptable to the reader. At any rate, the writer hopes his humble labors may not be altogether unsuccessful in the promotion of the great cause of Christian morals and human happiness; and with this hope, commends the little volume, his readers, himself, and all mankind, to the divine favor and mercy.

*Providence, January 1, 1839.*



## THE SPIRIT, &c.

---

ROGER WILLIAMS was the man who lived and labored for all coming time. With great propriety it may be said of him, as Coleridge said of Milton—“that he lived so far in advance of his age, as to dwarf himself in the distance.” The people of his own times did not understand him—for, while he believed every man should be left entirely free from dictation and penalties by human government, in matters of conscience, and of religion,—while he believed in the soul’s unchecked and entire freedom, to act in strict accordance with those high and fearful responsibilities which originate in its own convictions of truth and duty,—while he, ROGER WILLIAMS thus believed, the many *tender mercies* of his own times were developed by an attempt to make every man’s conscience for him; and in making every act of resistance to that attempt, a *penal offence*!

The magistrates and law makers in the days of our forefathers, were not satisfied with defending religion, but took upon themselves also to *define* it, and then to *enforce* uniformity by LAW! With these views, they inflicted punishments, and, in some instances, even death, on those whose sense of duty led them to act differently from the dictates of the standard creed; *thus becoming the judges of other men's consciences.* ROGER WILLIAMS said, in spirit, this enslaves the soul! and takes down the importance, and destroys the dignity of the god-like and undying spirit within. He said, the soul must be free as air—free from all fear of man—free to obey the voice of God, by whom alone we must be judged at the last day. He said, we must have unity without uniformity—and in taking this position, he placed a RIGHT CHARACTER in the foreground, and left all opinions, considered as such, in the shade.

We would not represent ROGER WILLIAMS as having been indifferent to doctrines and creeds. Perhaps no man was ever more tenacious of a creed, than he. But, though tenacious himself, he accorded to every other person, the liberty he claimed and exercised for himself, in matters of conscience. He believed in the right of private judgment—in the right of every man to make his own creed, and to

obey the truth as he receives it from the word of God, in accordance with his own conviction of right.

Leaving the mind thus free in its inquiries for truth, and free to obey, he reasoned correctly in coming to the conclusion, that, with such an almost infinite variety of temperaments and modes of education as will ever exist, and each mode predisposing the mind to some ideas and impressions peculiar to itself, it was chimerical to expect *uniformity of belief*—and that, to coerce mind is impossible. To enforce uniformity, is to destroy freedom of thought, and freedom of discussion, as well as sincerity; and, at the same time, it enslaves the mind. It is, in fact, the appropriate method to increase hypocrisy.

Important as Mr. Williams believed it to be, to imbibe and maintain correct opinions, yet the old adage may have originated in his theory, that it is possible for a man to be orthodox in his creed, and heterodox in his conduct; and *vice versa*. Following out this theory, we see creeds, when regarded as a test of fellowship, receding farther and farther in the back ground, untill finally lost to the view in the distance.

Follow still, and you see the Christian world rallying around another standard, and substituting

another test of fellowship and brotherhood; and that will be the *fruits of righteousness*. So far as this theory prevails, men will go forth to seek out their *brethren*, guided not by an inquiry for a particular creed; but rather by the test the Saviour gave; "By their fruits ye shall know them." This course of inquiry brings us again to the subject of the *right character*, without any reference to the creed, in an abstract point of view.

When all the various sects of Christians shall make a *right character*, consisting in holiness of heart and life, the only test of Christian fellowship, calling no man brother, unless he doeth the will of our Heavenly Father, then angry strife among Christians about doctrines, will cease, which has so much multiplied sceptics, and hindered the conversion of the world to Christ. Then, being put upon the *right character*, in order to obtain fellowship in the church of God, will candidates for membership seek more earnestly what they should *be*, rather than what they should believe.

Loose as this course may appear with reference to doctrine, and wide as it would seem to open the door through which heresy might gain admission into the church, there is no better mode of keeping her pure in her *life*, and doctrine; for, first, on this theory, the church is built upon the fruits,

or evidences of a Christian character, without particular respect to doctrine, and, however incorrect the members of such a church might be in this particular, it is an evil infinitely less, than to find a church, were such a thing possible, correct in doctrine, but without the spirit and practice of religion. But it is impossible for a church to be composed of members who bear the "*fruit*," and "do the will of God," without having the truth somewhere. If it be not developed in the theory, which the brother has adopted, perhaps by force of education—if it be not in the *head*, it will be found to influence the *heart*. Our Saviour gave us no surer way to find *right doctrine*, than by seeking out a *right character*. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine," was his language to the multitude. The secret is, no heart can understand the word of God, unless its truths be sought for, with a sincere desire for obedience. We therefore repeat, that, if the various sects would relinquish creeds as the test of fellowship, and substitute for them, a right character, a character which can be known by its "fruits," we should no longer hear the paradoxical language now in use, "*we believe him to be a Christian, and that he would go to heaven, should he die* ; but he is not a Baptist, a Methodist, an Episcopalian, or a Presbyterian, as the case may

be, and therefore *we cannot fellowship him as a member of our church!*” How common is such language.

Now in our opinion, no church on earth ought to be so constituted, as to feel itself compelled to pay such a deference to creed, or usage, as to refuse to extend fellowship and watchcare to any one they believe approbated of Christ, and who, they also believe, would be received into the church in heaven, should he die. We would then, lay this down as a principle—*that those who are fit to enter the church in heaven, are fit subjects for membership in the purest church on earth, and should not be rejected for nonconformity to certain creeds and formularies.* It may now be inquired, in following out this principle, shall we not see, in one local organization, or branch of the church of God, some who are baptized by immersion, some by fusion, and others by sprinkling, together with their irresponsible infant offspring? If we shall not have, in the same body, some who believe in Calvinism, and others in Arminianism, and so on? Perhaps so, but what then? Let it be remembered that, if the test of fellowship be the Christian character, and if this test be strictly adhered to, persons thus gaining admission, will be *Christians*, whatever the modes of belief, and *this* is the best of all. It should also be recollected that

the fellowship of such a body of Christians, is not founded on *forms* and *means*, but on the GREAT END of true religion, the right, or Christian character. Heterogeneous as this mass may appear to a sectarian eye, yet, in the *substantials* of religion, these Christians will be sweetly united in fellowship—a fellowship that shall survive all sectarianism; for it subsists not on profession, or on uniformity of creed or name, but on character.

There is never so much difference of opinion as to the substantial parts of religion, the parts which pass with us from this life to the next, and which “give us boldness in the day of judgment,” as about mere modes of belief. In short, it is not about the faith in which salvation lies, that men differ. Who has ever witnessed an angry debate on the subjects of goodness of heart, and Christian morals? On these, all agree; it is only on what is intended as means, that we differ in opinion.

The last point to which this principle will lead us, is this:—When character shall, in all churches, and among all Christians, be made the test of fellowship and membership, and every man be left to make his own creed, sectarianism must die; and that, for the very obvious reason, that there will be nothing to differ about, which can operate as a bar to union of heart and affections; while, in matters



of form and means, each one having the liberty to judge for himself, if they cannot agree to think alike, they will agree to differ. And about goodness of heart, there can be no contention, except in the glorious rivalry as to who shall rise to the highest point of excellence, in the scale of Christian morals. Glorious emulation indeed! May its prevalence become universal!

Not until the church shall have taken this position, will she be able to demonstrate, with an all pervading evidence, to Jews, Mahometans, and Pagans, that her Saviour is the Lord from Heaven. How fervent was His prayer, "that they all may be ONE, that the world may believe thou hast sent me."

When the church is so constituted as to make character the only test of fellowship, irrespective of creeds, or forms, then, and not till then will the disciples of Christ be *one*. But now, so much more importance is attached to doctrines, ordinances and modes, that, while the language which many of our churches hold towards delinquents in conduct is "we must bear with them," yet let the member of a Baptist church express a wish to have his infants baptised, or, let the member of a Calvinist church fall into Armenianism, and he is not the subject of forbearance! It is a heresy; therefore toleration is



sin! and he soon finds the door of the church, whatever may be his character. So it ever will be while articles of faith, and modes of government, or any other thing, is a test of fellowship and membership, besides holiness of heart and life.

That ROGER WILLIAMS contemplated all the results of which we speak, we will not undertake to say; though they legitimately proceed from the premises he assumed, and the general principle of action which he adopted and enforced. This it was, which carried him forward, out of sight of his own times, and, may be, like the ancient prophets, even out of sight of himself.

With the ministry of the age in which he lived, he was decidedly dissatisfied; and, what wonder? When he saw them attempting to purify the church, and to protect it from heresy, by the strength of the *secular arm*, instead of the force of *moral power*, there could be no wonder that *he* was dissatisfied. On this subject, he said, "In the poor small span of my life, I desired to have been a diligent and constant observer; and have been myself many ways engaged, in city, in country, in court, in schools, in universities, in churches, in Old and New England, and yet, cannot in the holy presence of God, bring in the result of a satisfying discovery, that either the begetting ministry of the Apostles, or Messenger to

the churches, or the feeding and nourishing ministry of pastors and teachers, according to the first institutions of the Lord Jesus, are yet restored and extant."

The fact is, the universal adoption of his own principles was destined to produce an order of things so different from that under which he lived, as respected the church, and so much more glorious, that it is not at all surprising, that, removed as he was at such a remote distance from the result he should have seen the event only "as through a glass, darkly." Nor is it strange, that the brightness of the glorious, though distant day, even though shining through the vista of ages, should so have dazzled his organs of vision, that, to use a beautiful scripture simile, he only saw "men as trees walking."

Though more than two centuries have elapsed, since ROGER WILLIAMS first proclaimed the principle, then new to the Christian world, that the CIVIL POWER HAS NO RIGHTFUL JURISDICTION OVER THE CONSCIENCE, AND CANNOT CONTROL THE RELIGIOUS OPINIONS OF MEN, *yet our own age has not come up with him.* We have not yet imbibed his philosophy in its full extent, and hence it is, that the name which future ages shall revere, as that of the noblest apostle in the cause of the soul's freedom in modern ages, is but imperfectly known.

Let us pause here for a moment, and inquire, were ROGER WILLIAMS now among us, what position would he occupy in the great moral conflict which is now in progress? Though we stood listening over the grave of this great and good man, no voice from his slumbering dust might be heard to point out the precise part of the field of moral reform, to which he would devote his labors with the greatest energy and delight. But, of one thing we may rest assured, that, what he believed to be *right* and *duty, that would he do*. If there was one trait in his character, more resplendent, or more prominent than another, it was uncompromising integrity and fixedness of purpose, in what he considered to be duty, and an ardent attachment to truth.

ROGER WILLIAMS was a man highly endowed with moral courage. He never flinched, nor turned aside from his course, for fear of consequences. It was enough for him to know what duty demanded. He yielded ready obedience, and left the results in the hands of his God. Were he a sojourner with us, we think it would be difficult for him now, as it was two hundred years ago, "to bring in the result of a satisfying discovery, that many of the present ministry, are the begotten ministry of the apostles." Would not his righteous soul be grieved, to see so many of our ministers sitting in their parishes like

birds of prey, perched in high places, pondering to learn what the people will *bear*, and studying so to mould the truth, if truth they preach, as to give no offence, that the *ministry be not blamed*; and so turning the truth of God into a lie? Would he not be surprised, to see how quietly man-stealers, traders in human flesh, can sit in our churches, receiving no rebuke? And would not the surprise be overwhelming, to hear our ministers bring forth scripture apologies, as anodynes for the conscience, to those, who unman the image of God, and reduce their fellow men to articles of merchandize—lest they should feel disturbed by the rays of light now shed upon the civilized world. Would not ROGER WILLIAMS be astonished, should he rise from his grave, and go into the churches, in whose neighborhood are living springs\* of pure water, which he, like father Jacob, had bequeathed to posterity, and there find spirit drinkers, church members? And there, also, the lottery gambler, and the licentious person! When he had surveyed the entire mass, would he not find there, the man who oppresseth the hireling in his wages, and the man who stands ready when his *country* calls, to go forth in the name of the Prince of Peace, to swell the “noise of war,” and

---

\* See note A.

multiply the "garments rolled in blood," with assurance of the PARSON'S prayers for success?

Methinks I hear the astonished spirit of ROGER WILLIAMS, as it stalks forth among the things of earth, inquiring of the first minister who falls in its way, "Have you, still, the Christian scriptures, or have you adopted some heathen code? The Koran it cannot be; for that prohibits the use of intoxicating drinks." The Pastor replies, "No—we still retain the Holy Scriptures; and they inform us that the wheat and the tares must grow together until the harvest; and besides, for the sake of *peace in the church*, we suffer sin upon our neighbor; hoping that, by holding the flock together, all may be turned from the error of their ways." "But," responds the spirit of ROGER WILLIAMS, "your plan is, to 'Do evil, that good may come'—besides, how can you expect to convert sinners from the error of their ways, unless you make an application of TRUTH to their minds? For this you have no 'Thus saith the Lord.' Your desire to preserve the peace of the church, has originated in the fear of losing your settlement, your salary, or your popularity. God will hold you responsible for all the sins you have covered over, or suffered to pass unrebuked. And of how much value is the *peace* you labor with so much assiduity to preserve? It is of no intrinsic

worth. It is merely superficial. It is a healing of the surface only,—the probe of the surgeon will lay open the gangrene. Your *peace* is your *ruin*. Agitation alone can save you,—agitation of the whole body, until you produce the scripture evidences of soundness, on which to build with safety.”

Methinks I hear the immortal WILLIAMS, on his terrestrial visit, farther inquire, “Why does the work of the world’s conversion to Christ, move on at a pace so slow and languid? Why does Christianity exert an influence so feeble, over the nations? Why is it, that the Christian name, wherever it is heard, carries with it such a dread of the men who bear it? Is it not because they have been unkind and cruel? Because they have waged so many wars, and carried so many of their fellow beings into captivity and bondage? Your’s is a corrupted Christianity!—In your hands it requires to be both revised and defined!—You must take higher ground, or you cannot be instrumental in turning this unregenerate world to Christ.”

It forms no part of our plan, to write a new biography of ROGER WILLIAMS. It is our purpose merely to select some of the most prominent and striking incidents of his life, and place them, in a condensed form, and in a small volume, the cheap-

ness of which shall enable all those who wish for some tribute to the memory of the FOUNDER of Rhode Island, to possess it ; and who might not be able to avail themselves of more expensive works. Doubtful, however, of his own ability to make the best selections from a life of more than seventy years, the author has taken the liberty to select and abridge from the Biography of Roger Williams, an excellent work written by Professor Knowles. Rev. Mr. Upham, a gentleman of Salem, Mass., well known as an intelligent historical lecturer, and author of the Life of Sir Henry Vane, was written to for assistance, he being the writer of a life of Roger Williams, in two lectures, delivered before the " Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge," in Boston, and in other places, to multitudes of delighted auditors. We were in hopes of obtaining his aid in making up this little volume, but he was unable to lend his assistance, in consequence of a press of engagements, and, in reply to the request, favored us with the following note, which we have liberty to publish.

*Salem, Nov. 8, 1838.*

REV. L. D. JOHNSON ;—

*Dear Sir :—*It gives me great pleasure to hear that you intend to prepare a memoir of Roger Williams. As the church of which you are Pastor,



professes to adhere to his leading principles of faith and order, there is an evident propriety in your design to illustrate his character and spirit in a biographical notice of him.

The churches and people of Rhode Island cannot over-estimate the claims of Roger Williams to their grateful remembrance. He was not without the infirmities of human nature, and partook of the peculiarities of his times. His controversial tone, like that of Milton, and his contemporaries in general, was severe and violent; and perhaps he is liable to the charge, to which all enthusiastic and ardent reformers and dissenters are exposed, of having been too strenuously and exclusively intent upon the enforcement of his favorite theories and principles. But those theories and principles of government in Church and State, to the defence of which, the long life of Roger Williams was devoted, were of supreme importance, and the liberty and peace of nations, and the prosperity and glory of the Christian church, depend upon their adoption and diffusion.

Roger Williams was a very learned man. He had a noble genius, and a truly generous and benevolent spirit. He was sincere and brave in his temperament, profound and comprehensive in his views; and his moral sentiments were expanded, and warmed by the genuine influence of Christian love and piety.



He was a most worthy founder of a free state ; an asserter of civil and Christian liberty upon the only true principles, which he was among the first, if not the very first, to comprehend and maintain ; and a benefactor of the whole civilized and Christian world, inasmuch as he faithfully advocated, and successfully established their principles, causing them to strike their roots so deep into the colony he planted, that they can never be eradicated ; but will flourish there forever. Those principles will at last be transplanted from Rhode Island, into every part of Christendom.

You have my best wishes in your undertaking, and I shall rejoice in your efforts to extend the influence of civil and religious liberty, by making more generally known and appreciated, the character and memory of one of their earliest and worthiest promulgators and champions.

With sincere regard, your friend,

CHARLES W. UPHAM.

---

Of the early life of ROGER WILLIAMS, but a few facts are known. In his own writings, there is nothing relative to his parents, or the place where he was born and educated ; nor to the events of his infancy and youth ; and but little of himself, previous to his arrival in America. It is said, by tradition,

that he was born in Wales, either in 1598 or 1599; and Knowles says, "He possessed the Welch temperament—excitable and ardent feelings, generosity, courage, and firmness, which sometimes, perhaps, had a touch of obstinacy." Of himself, Mr. Williams says, "From my childhood, now about three score years, the Father of lights and mercies touched my soul with a love to himself, to his only begotten Son, the true Lord Jesus, to his holy scriptures," &c.

It is said he became the *protégé* of the celebrated Sir Edward Coke, in consequence of the ability manifested by him, in taking notes of a sermon, in church, while a boy. Sir Edward took him under his care, and gave him a collegiate education; after which, he commenced the study of the law; but preferring that of theology, he turned his attention to that, and was, in the end, ordained as a clergyman of the Episcopal church. His preaching is said to have been highly esteemed, and his character to have been revered.

Roger Williams came to America at about thirty-two years of age. He came over in the ship *Lyon*,\* Capt. Peirce, from Bristol, Eng., together with his wife, and about twenty other passengers; and arrived in Boston harbor, February 5, 1630-1.

---

\* See Note B.

The assistant teacher of the church at Salem having died, Mr. Williams, by invitation from the church, assumed the office, in a few weeks after his arrival from England. But, in accordance with the spirit of those times, the civil authorities soon interfered in the matter, to dissolve the connexion between him and the Salem church, on the charge of his being a schismatic. This charge was preferred on the ground that Mr. Williams had refused to unite with the church at Boston, because they would not proclaim their repentance for having communed with the churches of England; and that he had declared that the civil magistrate ought not to punish the breach of the Sabbath, nor any other offence, as a breach of the first table of the law; in other words, the four first commandments, which prescribe our duties to God.

It would seem that the reason why Mr. Williams rebuked the church at Boston was, that many of the members, while in England, though dissatisfied with the corruptions of the English church, still continued their communion with it, through fear of legal consequences, till the time of leaving that country, and had not publicly repented of the act. That the magistrate ought not to punish breaches of duty of man to his God, needs now no explanation or defence. The soundness of the doctrine is

admitted on all hands, though it is not, in all cases, carried out in practice. A letter was despatched by the court at Boston, desiring that the church at Salem would not proceed to invest Mr. Williams with the sacred office, till a conference had been held on the subject. But the Salem church disregarded the mandate, and proceeded, on the very day of the court, to the installation of Mr. Williams, as their teacher. In about a month afterwards, May 18, 1631, Mr. Williams was admitted a free-man of the Colony, and took the requisite oath. But he was not destined to occupy the field of his labors in peace. The hand of persecution was let loose upon him; and before the next autumn after his settlement at Salem, he found it necessary to seek shelter and protection at Plymouth, out of the Massachusetts jurisdiction.

It is not probable that this act of separation was voluntary on the part of the church, but brought about by circumstances beyond their control; for all, even his enemies included, agree that Mr. Williams was highly esteemed by the people of his charge, and was again received by them with open arms two years after his flight from Salem, and reinstated in the sacred office. He had also been received respectfully at Plymouth; and, during his

stay there, officiated as assistant teacher in the church in that place.

The stay of Mr. Williams at Plymouth, introduced him to an intercourse with the Indians. They frequently visited the town, and he visited them in their native wilds, to study them, and qualify himself, as he said, to "Do the natives good." His after life proved this profession to have been sincere. In this manner he formed an acquaintance with Massassoit, or Ousamequin, Sachem of the Pokanokets, and with Canonicus, Chief of the Narragansets. This acquaintance, and the sentiments connected with it, proved afterwards of signal benefit, not only to him in his attempt to establish the Colony of Rhode Island, but also even to Massachusetts, from whose domain he was eventually driven, by unhallowed persecution. Indeed, it is thought he had imbibed the desire, and formed the intention, of taking up his residence among the Indians, previous to this period; supposing he should not long be permitted to remain among his white brethren.

It is said his opinions were not well received by the leading persons at Plymouth. Probably they were too much tinctured with freedom and equality, to suit their taste. Yet he was not censured by the church, and so great was the attachment to him,

that, on his return to Salem, some accompanied him to that place. At Plymouth, his first daughter was born, in August, 1633, and called Mary, after her mother. Soon after his return to Salem, the General Court thought proper, once more to call him to account; and, December 27, 1633, the Governor and Assistants convened, to consult about him.

The cause of offence, this time, was a treatise written to the Governor and Assistants, and to the Governor and Council of Plymouth, disputing their right to the lands they held by virtue of the King's grant, and holding that the mere act of discovery constituted not an ownership of the land; and that it belonged not to the King, or to them, unless purchased of the natives. Also, that he had virtually charged King James with falsehood, by denying him to have been the first Christian discoverer of the land, as that monarch claimed: Also that he had charged King James with blasphemy, for calling Europe, Christendom, or the Christian world. Lastly, that he had applied to King Charles, three passages in Revelations; though what passages, we are not told; probably, however, not very complimentary ones. On being called upon to retract, he professed that the book was written only for the private satisfaction of the Governor and Council of Plymouth, and that no other copy would have been

forthcoming had it not been demanded by the Governor of Massachusetts. He appeared again at the next court, and gave satisfaction; and there the matter dropped. What may have been the language and spirit of the book, cannot now be known; but, as far as the points stated above may go, they are not very far from truth.

For a time, the magistrates let him alone. He continued in Salem; and, on the death of Mr. Skelton, Pastor of the church, in August, 1634, he was invited to succeed him. The magistrates requested that he should not be ordained; but the church, strongly attached to him, refused to be dictated, and Mr. Williams was ordained forthwith. This act was called "a great contempt of authority;" and it proved the basis of subsequent persecution.

Shortly after this, new charges came up against him from the court. He was charged with preaching against the validity of the King's patent, in violation of an alleged promise not to do so; alluding probably to his "*penitence*," as it was called, in the case of the offensive treatise already spoken of; and also, that he had declared, that a magistrate ought not to tender an oath to an unregenerate man; thereby having communion with a wicked man, and teaching him to take the name of God in vain. The first of these charges was preferred, and a sum-



mons granted, Nov. 27, 1634—the latter, April 30, 1635. He was heard in his defence, before all the ministers, but we learn nothing farther, than that *they* claim that he was fully confuted.

In July following, he was again called up; and, on that occasion, the court seems to have brought up the old charge relative to punishment by the magistrate, for breaches of the first table of the law, together with that touching oaths, and two others, in which it is said he taught that a man ought not to pray with the unregenerate, nor to return thanks after the sacrament, nor after eating. The business was postponed; and, in October of the same year, he was again called before the court, tried, and banished from the colony. He subsequently received permission to remain till spring; but continuing to receive company at his house, and to preach, the Governor and Assistants determined to send him to England. This determination, however, was not carried into effect; for before the force arrived, sent to remove him, he had gone from his home, to seek an asylum elsewhere.

Mr. Williams left Salem, in a bad state of health, in January, 1635–6, according to Knowles, and bent his course towards Narraganset Bay; where he and others with him at Salem, it is thought, had for some time contemplated making an attempt to found



a colony. According to his own account, his sufferings were intense ;\* he having been, for fourteen weeks, destitute of bread to eat, or a bed to lie on ! Ousamequin, Sachem of Pokanoket, who resided at Mount Hope, near Bristol, R. I., it appears, gave him a grant of land in the, now, town of Seekonk. Here he sat down on a spot which, according to the information given by the late Moses Brown, to Mr. Knowles, appears to be that called Manton's Neck, between the Cove, so called, and Central Bridge. It is probable that, during the remainder of the winter, he depended on the Indians for subsistence ; and may allude to the fact, as Knowles says, in the following lines :—

“ God's Providence is rich to his,  
Let none distrustful be ;  
In wilderness, in great distress,  
These ravens have fed me.”

He had hoped to remain here, and took measures accordingly, and was joined by several friends ; his wife and children being still at Salem. But finding himself still within the jurisdiction of Massachusetts, he, by the advice of Gov. Winslow, of Plymouth, determined to make another remove. Accordingly, he embarked, with five others, in a canoe, and proceeded down the river. At India Point, they were

---

\* See Note C.

greeted by a company of Indians, with the friendly salutation of "*What cheer?*"\* They proceeded around Fox Point, up what is now called Providence river; and landed, as tradition says, on the east side, near the spring which still remains, near the site now occupied by the Rev. Doct. Crocker's [Episcopal] church, and near which spot he erected his habitation.

The town, the settlement of which was thus commenced, Mr. Williams called Providence, in commemoration of the goodness of Divine Providence to him, and this was the foundation of the Colony, now State, of Rhode Island. Strange as it may appear, even the precise year in which this event occurred has been involved in doubt; but Mr. Knowles, after a long and patient investigation, has come to the conclusion that it took place in the summer of 1636; the same year in which the settlement of Hartford, Con., was commenced.

Mr. Williams seems to have experienced little difficulty, if any, in procuring land from the natives, probably owing to the friendship and kindness he manifested for them, and the consequent respect they entertained for him, as is evident from the influence he subsequently exercised over them. Indeed, he says, "It was not thousands, nor tens of thousands

---

\* See Note D.

of money could have bought of him [Canonicus] an English entrance into this bay." He farther says, that "it was by God's mercies" he "was the procurer of the purchase," and that though the shyness and jealousy of the natives would have prevented it by means of money, he did it by means of acquaintance with their language, and favor with the natives, and other advantages which it pleased God to give him. Other proofs exist, that the lands were granted rather as a favor to a friend, than for pecuniary considerations; and the subsequent good understanding which prevailed between Mr. Williams and his Indian neighbors, showed that the confidence of neither had been misplaced.

Of the lands originally purchased, Mr. Williams was honestly the legal proprietor; but with a degree of liberality highly honorable to him, and which proved how little he was influenced by a mercenary spirit, he divided them between himself and his associates, equally, and at the original cost. He might have remained proprietor of the whole, and retained in his own hands, a controlling power over the colony; but his was the master spirit of equal rights in that bigoted and arbitrary age, and he forbore to avail himself of the favorable opportunity for personal aggrandizement, to carry out in practice, what he had embodied in theory—the true principles of

DEMOCRACY; and established the first government of that description, known in the Christian world.

We now find Mr. Williams, an exile from civilized society for conscience sake, probably in a state of poverty and almost destitution, surrounded by a few trusty friends who voluntarily shared his banishment, in a dreary wilderness, in the midst of a savage tribe, dependent on Providence and his personal efforts, for support for himself and a dependent and helpless family. But his firm and undaunted spirit did not quail. His trust was in God. He looked to the future with unshaken confidence, and in full possession of that freedom for which his soul panted, was happy, even amidst bodily suffering. True to his own principles, he unfurled the banner of civil and religious freedom, and made the colony he had founded, a shelter from the oppressor, and an asylum for the oppressed, without respect to creeds and formularies, or the dogmatical dictation of bigoted and infatuated men. Hence it was, that the articles of agreement he drew up, required of those who should become associates with him, that they should submit themselves to such rules and regulations as might be adopted for the public good, "*in civil things only.*"

As a proof of the magnanimity of Mr. Williams, in July of the same year of his banishment, when, in

consequence of the murder of a Mr. Oldham, of Massachusetts, by the Indians, and retaliatory measures which followed, a bloody war with the Pequods appeared inevitable, he readily undertook a mission to the exasperated savages, at the solicitation of the government which had banished him from its domain. He "took his life in his hand ;" and in defiance of all hazard, proceeded to the Indian camp. And, although he could not prevent the war, his influence dissuaded the Naragansets from joining in it ; and by which means, the Pequods became an easy prey to the English, and were completely extirpated. Without his interference, the result might have been fatal to the English colonists. Yet, notwithstanding the friendly part he acted towards Massachusetts in this affair, and his successful mediation between that government and the savages, they gave him no mark of favor, and did not even recall his sentence of banishment !

In 1638, Mr. Williams was called upon by the Governor of Massachusetts, a second time, to interpose his good offices with the Indians, to procure satisfaction for an act of violence and injustice. Forgetful of the wrongs, the violence, and the injustice, which he had received at the hands of his persecuting brethren, he again set forward on the mission of peace. He met the savage chief, and

demanded satisfaction. It was promptly accorded, and war and bloodshed prevented; and yet, **ROGER WILLIAMS** *remained a banished man!*

Mr. Williams was originally of the church of England, but broke from that communion, though he appears never to have united with much cordiality with the Puritans of New England. Indeed, however mutually conformable may have been their religious opinions, their spirits were so totally dissimilar from each other, that a union between them, would have been like that of oil and vinegar. During the first two or three years of the infancy of the new colony, no church appears to have been organized, though meetings of worship were holden, and Mr. Williams preached to the people. But, in 1638-9, he had become a believer in the necessity of baptism by immersion, and, in March of that year, he and ten others were baptized by Mr. Holliman. A church was then formed, said to be the first Baptist church ever constituted in the British dominions; and of which we shall say more hereafter.

During several years, we find little said of Mr. Williams, and less that demands a place in this brief sketch. Once more he was called upon by Massachusetts, to mediate with the Narragansets.

Miantinomo, their Chief, was desired to repair to Boston. This, he promised to do, provided Mr. Williams would accompany him. *This, the authorities of Massachusetts would not allow*; and the interview did not take place. This circumstance affords evidence of the confidence reposed in Mr. Williams, by the natives, and of the bigotry and ingratitude of the government of Massachusetts. Even so far was this intolerant spirit carried, that, on account of her fundamental principle of entire religious freedom, Rhode Island was excluded from the confederacy of the New England Colonies, formed in 1643, for mutual protection against the savages, and never after permitted to join it. Connected with this affair, is a glorious fact, which should ever occupy the most prominent place, on the most resplendent page, of New England's early history. Though left, weak and feeble as she was, to her own resources, without a military force of any magnitude, by the peaceful, conciliatory, and honorable course, pursued by Mr. Williams and his associates, Rhode Island maintained peace for herself, (while her sister colonies suffered the horrid ravages of Indian warfare,) without an appeal to arms; and by the persevering exercise of her influence with the savage tribes, did much to appease their wrath, and to soften the rigors of war.



In 1643, Mr. Williams visited England. On his passage, he threw together his materials for "A KEY TO THE INDIAN LANGUAGE;" which was finished and printed in the same year; and, during his stay in England, he wrote and published his book entitled "THE BLOODY TENET OF PERSECUTION OF THE CAUSE OF CONSCIENCE," &c. On this visit, also, he procured the charter for the colony of Rhode Island, bearing date, March 14, 1643-4; and arrived again in America, September 17, 1644; He landed at Boston, being emboldened to do so by letters he bore from sundry leading men in England; but though he was permitted to proceed quietly to Providence, yet the sentence of banishment was neither revoked nor ameliorated. He was met at Seekonk on his return, by citizens of Providence, and received by them with a respect and cordiality, characteristic of their gratitude to him for his services, and their affection for him as a man and a brother.

The authorities of Massachusetts had obtained possession of the person of Miantinomo, the Narraganset chief, and, for some alleged offence, caused him to be executed at Boston. His people considered this as an act of murder, and determined to avenge it, by making war on the Mohegans, who had delivered him up, and on all the colonies ex-



cept Providence and Rhode Island. Massachusetts raised a military force, to act in the emergency, and despatched messengers to the Narragansets, to treat of peace. The attempt to negotiate proved unsuccessful. Messengers were a second time sent. In the mean time, the Narraganset sachems had solicited the advice of Mr. Williams, and being also called on for aid by the Massachusetts messengers, he interposed between the hostile parties, and effected a treaty of peace; thus again preventing a dreadful war.

The first General Assembly of the colony was held at Newport, May 19, 1647; and ROGER WILLIAMS was elected Assistant, for Providence; and the Assembly established a “*democratical*” government, or a government by the “*free and voluntary consent*” of the people; and in which, the utmost latitude is given to the conscience in matters of religion; and providing that “ALL MEN MAY WALK AS THEIR CONSCIENCES PERSUADE THEM, EVERY ONE IN THE NAME OF HIS GOD.”

For his faithful services, the General Assembly passed a vote of thanks to Mr. Williams, who had been chiefly instrumental in the great and noble work, and made him a grant of one hundred pounds; a large sum for the times, and the circumstances of the colony, but a poor equivalent for his labors, his

services, and his sacrifices. Yet it was doubtless received as it was awarded—as a token of gratitude and respect, to the man the people delighted to honor.

Though peace had been maintained with the Indians, internal strife on political questions, and disputes about boundaries among themselves, and the overbearing conduct of their neighbor colonists, began to mar the peace of the community, and continued for many years. But, during that period of trouble, Mr. Williams maintained his characteristic firmness and integrity, and did much to allay the flame of discord. His letters, from which our narrow limits will not permit us to make extracts, show how deeply he felt and suffered, from the existence of these evils, how great an interest he took in the welfare of the colony, and what personal sacrifices he was willing to make, to promote it.

In 1651, Mr. Williams visited England a second time. His object was, to procure a revocation of the commission of Coddington, by which Rhode Island had been separated from the present colony. He was met with opposition, but succeeded in his mission; and the commission of Coddington was vacated, and the former charter confirmed. About this time, he published several controversial works,

in reply to various attacks made upon him, but to which we have not room to refer, even by name.

After Mr. Williams's return, Massachusetts steadily refused to change her policy respecting him. But, we find a letter dated by him, BOSTON, 17 3 (mo.) '56; and we learn from a note of his, to the General Court, that he was in that town, by virtue of an order from "The Lords of his Highness's Council."

By the General Assembly of Rhode Island, he was elected President, and held that office two years. It was a period of civil discord in the parent country, in the time of the Commonwealth, under Oliver Cromwell. The effects were felt in the colonies; and they rendered the station occupied by Mr. Williams, uncomfortable to him. It was during this period, that he caused the arrest of William Harris, for alleged hostility to Cromwell's government, and caused him to be imprisoned, for the purpose of sending him to England for trial. The measure, right or wrong, was not sanctioned by public opinion. This event occurred February 1, 1657-8, and in May following, Mr. Williams was superseded by the election of some one else, as President. Yet, he continued to be elected Assistant, from Providence, and occupied his seat at the Board. Harris, it would seem, was a troublesome man. In 1667, there was much disturbance

in Providence. Two sets of Deputies were elected. Harris was elected by one party. But he was expelled from the Assembly, and fined forty pounds.

In 1667, Mr. Williams closed his public life as a legislator, refusing to serve on account of his age.

During his long, arduous and highly useful life, or that part of it spent in America, this worthy man was frequently called out to defend himself against the hostile attacks of his enemies and opponents, and in defence of the colony of which, under God, he was the parent, against the violence and machinations of those who sought either to destroy it, or to subject it to arbitrary rule. In some of his writings he was bitter, and especially in his controversy with the Quakers. But this fault ought not to be ascribed to any deficiency in the goodness of his heart, when we recollect how much he did, and how much he suffered, to promote the welfare, not only of his friends, but of his bitterest enemies ; while, at the same time, he accorded to all others, the same privilege he claimed himself, to believe as their consciences might dictate, and to defend their own opinions in their own way. His temperament was ardent, and his feelings may have been somewhat soured by the bitter persecution he had suffered ; and these circumstances may have, in a measure, imparted their tone to his controversial writings. But

no one who scans his conduct, and scrutinises his character, can rightfully accuse him of a want of philanthropy, of social or public virtue, or genuine benevolence.

If we may judge from what appears in the history of the man, his character had no tincture of avarice, and no more of selfishness than is necessary to self-preservation, and the purest principles of Christian morality. His life was spent for the good of mankind ; and without grasping the means put into his hands, as the source of his own exclusive emolument, he generously declined to avail himself of the opportunity ; and with a degree of liberality seldom known among men, voluntarily shared those means with others. Yet, with all this nobility of character and conduct, he was not boastful. His letters speak the language of modest humility ; and while, with an honest and virtuous pride, he seems measurably sensible of the great benefit she has conferred, he ascribes all to the God of his soul's adoration, in whose bounty and goodness he rejoices, and acknowledges himself an humble instrument in his hands, and a dependent on his great mercy.

Thus lived ROGER WILLIAMS—the first of champions in the cause of civil and religious freedom, and the noble founder of the first FREE GOVERNMENT in Christendom. Posterity should cherish his mem-

ory with gratitude, and do honor to his virtues by copying his bright example.

He continued his public ministry to an advanced age, and was gathered to his fathers in peace. He died in the year 1683, aged EIGHTY-FOUR YEARS.

“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord ; for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.”

H I S T O R Y  
O F T H E  
R O G E R W I L L I A M S C H U R C H .

---

As this church, which was organized by Roger Williams, is the oldest Baptist church in America, it may not be deemed inappropriate to give some account of it in this place. "Its first members were twelve in number, viz.: Roger Williams, Ezekiel Holliman, William Arnold, William Harris, Stukeley Westcot, John Green, Richard Waterman, Thomas James, Robert Cole, William Carpenter, Francis Weston, and Thomas Olney."

Mr. Benedict, in his History of the Baptists, says, "Mr. Williams and those with him considered the importance of gospel union, and were desirous of forming themselves into a church, but met with a considerable obstruction; they were convinced of

the nature and design of believers' baptism by immersion; but, from a variety of circumstances, had hitherto been prevented from submission. To obtain a suitable administrator was a matter of consequence. At length the candidates for communion nominated Mr. Ezekiel Holliman, a man of gifts and piety, to baptise Mr. Williams; and who, in return, baptised Mr. Holliman and the other ten. This church was soon joined by twelve other persons, who came to this new settlement, and abode in harmony and peace."

Thus Mr. Williams, after having passed through the vicissitudes of first leaving England with the persecuted dissenters; then leaving Salem, where he was first settled, for Plymouth—where, as a preacher, he was eloquent and popular; then leaving Plymouth for Salem, again, to take charge of the church which first enjoyed the benefits of his instruction, from whence he was banished for "*publicly avowing that Christ alone is King in his own kingdom, and that no others had authority over his subjects, in the affairs of conscience and eternal salvation.*" And now, again, he is pastor of the little flock whose members, with himself, asserted the right of private judgment, in practice as well as principle, and who followed their own convictions



of duty, untrammelled by human dictation, either civil or ecclesiastical.

Mr. Holliman was subsequently chosen assistant to Mr. Williams. The precise length of time which Mr. Williams continued in his pastoral office is not known. Some accounts state three, or four years—and others, but about four months. One fact is certain, however; that he continued to preach the doctrine of redemption, through Jesus Christ, until his death. Many years after the organization of this church, when the affairs of the colony did not absorb his time, he was preaching to the natives, in their own tongue, whose language he had learned to speak. It may emphatically be said of him, as of our Saviour, "*He went about, doing good.*"

There were ten other ministers, who succeeded each other, in the pastoral charge of this church, down to the time when the Rev. Dr. Manning, founder of the Rhode Island College, now called Brown University, became its pastor. Elder Samuel Windsor was the predecessor of Elder Manning, to whom he (Manning) was first employed as assistant.

Immediately after Mr. Manning was invited to become the assistant of Elder Windsor, it was found that they did not precisely agree in their sentiments. Elder Windsor copied, with great precision, after the venerable founder of the church,

ROGER WILLIAMS. When Mr. Williams became a Baptist, he copied closely after the "Old," or "General Baptist," of England. The *general* Baptists, of his times, were designated from the *particular* Baptists, in two points: First, they did not believe in *particular* election, but in general redemption; hence came the term, *general* Baptist. Their own words are as follow:—"God hath predestinated that all that believe on him, shall be saved; and all that believe not, shall be damned. And this is the election and reprobation spoken of in the scriptures; not that God has predestinated men to be wicked, or to be damned, but that men, being wicked, shall be damned." The second distinction was, instead of holding to the "five points" merely, they held to *six*: hence comes the term, *six-principle* Baptist, as used in Rhode Island, when applied to the "Old Baptists," who are found almost exclusively in this State. The additional principle consists in the form of "laying on of hands," which this sect, both in England and America, believe to be an *ordinance*,—and attach the same importance to it that they do to baptism, or communion.

Roger Williams constituted his church on these *six principles*,\* and each succeeding minister fol-

---

\* These principles are found in Hebrews, vi. 1, 2.

lowed faithfully in his steps, down to Elder Manning's day. He believed in "*transient communion*," or in admitting those to the communion, on whom hands had not been laid, if they had been baptised. It was also said that Elder Manning believed in "special grace," or particular election.

Elder Manning's piety, and "his forcible and charming eloquence," carried a majority of the church with him. Elder Windsor, being a man of stern integrity, *was grieved with this innovation*. A church meeting was accordingly called, and the subject discussed; but when the vote was taken, it was found that a majority were for Elder Manning, and consequently for "*transient communion*." It was then left to the next association. The association, however, declined an interference, and referred the case back to the church—but there the case had been already settled. Viewing the church as having deviated from the true ground, and from the "*old paths*," Elder Windsor, with his party, sent in his resignation, in these words:—

"Dear Brethren and Sisters,—We must, in conscience, withdraw ourselves from all those who do not hold strictly to the six principles of the doctrine of Christ, as laid down in Hebrews, vi. 1, 2."

A final separation now ensued. Elder Windsor found a respectable minority with him, in his effort

to maintain the orthodox side of the question ; so that when the reorganization took place, including "the Elder, and Deacon John Dyer, there were eighty-seven members." Dr. Manning was now constituted sole pastor of the dissenting party. He was a man of high moral standing, and strong intellectual powers ; and being, withal, President of Rhode Island College, his superior attitude left the old senior pastor quite in the shade. Thus situated, Mr. Windsor thought it prudent, especially as it would accommodate many of the members, to erect their new house of worship in the adjoining town of Johnston. Report says, that the property of the old meeting house, in which Elder Windsor worshipped, was sold, and the proceeds amicably divided between the two parties. Dr. Manning's church built that magnificent pile, now the pride of Providence city, called the *First Baptist Church*. Elder Windsor's humble edifice was erected in 1774, where it now stands, in ruins, about two miles west of Providence. Here the orthodox church worshipped God, "unitedly established in the *six* principles of Christ's doctrine, upon which it was founded by the Rev. Roger Williams." Mr. Windsor lived, after the new organization, to see "a glorious reformation take place, under his labors, in which there were about fifty members added in one year."

Elder Windsor died in the year 1802, in the fiftieth year of his ministry, in the eighty-first year of his age, universally respected.

From the time that Elder Windsor died, it would seem that this church began rapidly to decline. In 1830, the house being in a dilapidated state, and the members few and feeble, Elder William C. Manchester, their pastor, proposed to leave it ; and, as there were some scattering members in Providence city, who were on the *true* ground of the six principles, he took with him such ones as this arrangement would accommodate, and opened worship in a school-house belonging to Sheldin Batty, Esq., in the city—whence arose the Roger Williams Church in the west part of Providence. Now for the name ! The precedence of *creed* or *principles* justly entitled them to the distinction of “*First*” Baptist Church in Providence. But they were now located within sight of one tall spire which is already thus designated. The pride of ancestry forbade their being called the *Fifth* Baptist Church. They therefore concluded, that, as they had carefully adhered to the principles of their venerable founder, and as an unbroken succession\* could be traced back

---

\* It is not unworthy of notice, that Benajah Williams, jr. the only Deacon of this church, is a descendant of Roger Williams. In his account of himself to the writer, he says:

to the organization by Roger Williams, the most appropriate name would be the ROGER WILLIAMS BAPTIST CHURCH. The pulpit stands between two pillars of prodigious size, for the interior of a church. If they were embossed with Corinthian capitals, and stone color, they would convey impressions of high antiquity. On the face of the pulpit is placed an Italian marble slab, on which is engraved these words: "Erected in memory of Roger Williams." Some persons have affected to laugh at *so humble an effort* to place before the *eye* of our rising race, a clue to the name, of which all Rhode Island might well be proud. But unintelligible, and unworthy of the man as this inscription may seem to be, we think it inappropriate for the citizens of Providence at least, to indulge in one

---

"My great-grandfather, Nathaniel Williams, was the great-grandson of Roger Williams, which places me in the sixth generation from our venerable ancestor." To avoid all mistake we went to the old burying ground of the Williams family, laying some three or four miles from Providence, in the town of Cranston, where we found the head stone, 1st. of Joseph Williams, Esq., son of Roger Williams; 2d, of James Williams, son of Joseph Williams; 3d, Nathaniel Williams, son of James Williams; and 4th, of Fredrick Williams, son of Nathaniel Williams; 5th, Benajah Williams, who is now living, is the son of Fredrick Williams, deceased, and Benajah Williams jr., Deacon of the Roger Williams Church, whose portrait is found in this little book, is the son of Benajah Williams, the senior.

smile of contempt, until it be surpassed by some nobler effort. For be it known, that while there are men in Providence, the interest of whose fortunes for one day only, would be a sufficient sum to erect a monument, on which, the inscription might tell to every passing traveller,

“ The sufferings great  
Which father Williams in his exile bore ; ”

yet no such monument is found. But now, unless the stranger, standing in Market Square, should chance to look up, and read “ **ROGER WILLIAMS BANK,** ” he will find nothing in Providence to remind him that it is the city, as well as the land of Roger Williams, except in a walk to the margin of the city, he should find his way into the Roger Williams church and take his seat in front of the pulpit.

In the spring of 1837, Elder Manchester resigned his pastoral charge. The church was now again without regular meetings. In the mean time, for having adopted instrumental music, in conformity with other churches of the city, the CONFERENCE of six principle Baptist churches, had disfranchised it, as a sister church ; for they believed, with the Mahometans, that it is a sin against God to praise his name with any instrument except the human voice. Being thus alone, they feared, as well they might, in this sectarian age, that there would be little sympathy



for them among neighboring ministers and churches, until they were again recognised as a sister church, by some sect. They, therefore, applied to the Rhode Island quarterly meeting of Free will Baptist churches, for admission into their fellowship, with the proviso, that they should not be required to make any change in their *faith* or *usages*. On examination, it was found that there was no need of a change of faith, for in theology they believed alike. Then, as to *usage*, the quarterly meeting responded: "We do not differ, only in the one point of *laying on of hands*, and this is most certainly an innocent practice. Why, then, refuse them? Let this church peaceably enjoy it"—and they were admitted as a sister church. At this time the male resident members were few, and, in a comparison with the debts standing against the church, they were feeble; for they owed between twelve and thirteen hundred dollars for their house—all of which must be paid within one brief year.

This was the state of this church, when the writer of these sheets left a more lucrative agency, and engaged his humble services to them. To support a family and pay these debts, required that there should be raised about eighteen hundred dollars. A train of means\* were commenced, which has

---

\* See Note E.



nearly accomplished the desired result. The year for which his services were engaged has expired, when we again resume our former labors in the cause of temperance. Important additions have been made to the church, through the past year, and under the labors of a more able minister than himself, which the writer has had the great satisfaction of seeing settled, we think there cannot fail to be continued prosperity to the *Roger Williams Baptist Church*.

## APPENDIX.

---

### NOTE A.

#### THE ROGER WILLIAMS' SPRING.

Tradition has uniformly stated the place where Roger Williams, and the five others who came with him in a canoe from Seekonk, landed, to be at a spring south west of the Episcopal (St. John's) Church.

On the 4th of July of this year, (1838) the friends of temperance in Providence, held a temperance celebration. They had a rich treat in an address from L. M. Sargent, Esq., author of the *Temperance Tales*; afterwards they dined together, being favored with the presence of Rev. Mr. Pierpont and other gentlemen from Boston, besides a large number of both *ladies* and gentlemen of Providence city and the adjacent towns. At the table a number of very excellent sentiments were offered touching the great

cause and its promoters, among which were the two following :

“ *The fourth of July of 1838*—the first celebration of this day on which the *ladies* could attend with propriety.” This sentiment was offered with reference to the fact that there was no drink used on the occasion stronger than cold water brought from the *Roger Williams’ spring*.

The other sentiment was offered by John Howland, Esq., the venerable antiquarian :

“ *Roger Williams*—The first friend of temperance in Rhode Island. By his will he bequeathed us a spring of cold water.”

Among the originals prepared and sung on the occasion, was the following beautiful hymn.

ROGER WILLIAMS’ SPRING.

Some sing the praise of rosy wine,  
 Its sparkling color bright ;  
 But in such songs with them to join  
 We cannot take delight.  
 We have a rich and noble theme,  
 Fit for a prince and king—  
 ’Tis water, pure, and fresh, and good,  
 From Roger Williams’ spring.

This will give health, and joy, and peace,  
 Refreshing every power ;  
 We want no better drink than this  
 In trial’s darkest hour.  
 To cheer the heart and quench the thirst  
 It is the very thing ;

Then give us water, pure and good,  
From Roger Williams' spring.

Our sires drank from this living spring  
Two hundred years ago ;  
And from this fountain, water clear  
Continues still to flow.

Then we, on this our festal day,  
Will of its virtues sing,  
And drink this water, pure and good,  
From Roger Williams' spring.

This was a glorious day to the cause of temperance. The Rhode Island State Temperance Society has not been behind in its labors to promote this great reform—nor is their work, or their disposition to work, yet through. We had not the pleasure of being present at the last annual meeting ; but from our knowledge of the cause as it exists in Rhode Island, our opinion is, that, even though there are some of our clergy who suffer their silence on the subject to be construed into a fear of offending their spirit-selling supporters, yet there has never been a period when so much talent, and moral power, could be brought into the field, as the friends of temperance can at present command. Because the Rhode Island General Assembly have seen fit so far to disgrace themselves in the eyes of all wise and good men, as, at their June session, to pass a law prohibiting the retailing of intoxicating drink in a less quantity than ten gallons ; and in their Oct. session of the same year, before there was a chance for the new law to go into effect, to repeal it—thereby

condemning the experiment before it was tried;—because of this, some have raised the hue and cry of “reaction.” “The cause,” say they, “is injured by its friends, by carrying things too far.” “The cause is carried back ten years,” &c., &c.—but all this is a mistake!—The cause *is* advancing. If it be thought, because politicians do not act *right* on temperance, that those who always have, and do still believe it to be a great moral question, are becoming discouraged, they will, doubtless, find themselves exceedingly mistaken. There are those who have put their hand to the plough, with the pledge not to man only, but to God, that they will not look back while life shall last—whose chief reliance, (whatever legislatures may do, for or against the cause) for the triumph of this work, is on the agency of TRUTH and the blessing of heaven.

---

#### NOTE B.

The vessel which brought Mr. Williams, was a regular colony ship. Great as the sufferings were of the first settlers of New England, perhaps there was no time when their distresses were greater than at the arrival of the ship Lyon. The following account of it is taken from Hutchinson's History, which it may not be unprofitable to read.

The weather held tolerable till the 24th of December, but the cold then came on with violence. Such a Christmas eve they had never seen before. From that time to the 10th of February their chief care was to keep themselves warm, and as comfortable in other respects as their scanty provisions would permit. The poorer sort were much exposed, lying in tents and miserable hovels, and many died of the scurvy and other distempers. They were so short of provisions that many were obliged to live on clams, muscles, and other shell fish, with ground nuts and acorns, instead of bread. One that came to the Governor's house to complain of his sufferings, was prevented, being informed that even there the last batch [of bread] was in the oven. They had appointed the 22d day of February for a fast; but on the 5th, to their great joy, the ship Lyon, Capt. Pierce, returned laden with provisions, from England, which were distributed according to the necessities of the people. They turned their fast into a "*thanksgiving*." This was the beginning of our New England thanksgiving-days.

---

#### NOTE C.

The following very interesting letter was first published in the first volume of the Massachusetts Historical Collections :

*“ Providence, June 22, 1670, (ut vulgo.)*

“ Major Mason,\*

“ My honored, dear and ancient friend, my due respects and earnest desires to God, for your eternal peace, &c.

“ I crave your leave and patience to present you with some few considerations, occasioned by the late transactions between your colony and ours. The last

---

\* “ Major Mason—famous for his services, while captain, in the Pequod war. He was a soldier in the Low Countries, under Sir Thomas Fairfax, one of the first settlers of Dorchester, Mass. in 1630. He afterwards removed to Windsor, Conn. He put an end to the Pequod war, in 1638; was appointed, soon after, Major General of the Connecticut forces, and in May, 1660, was elected Deputy Governor of that colony. He died at Norwich, in the seventy-third year of his age, in 1672 or 1673. An account of the Pequod war was published by him, republished in Hubbard's Narrative, and by Rev. T. Prince. In the fourth volume of the Massachusetts historical Collections, a curious poem is published, of Governor Wolcott's, giving an account of his predecessor Winthrop's embassy to the Court of Charles II, to obtain a charter, in which Mason is mentioned with the highest eulogies. Winthrop is made to give the King a relation, among other things, of the Pequod war, and says :

‘ The army now drawn up : to be their head  
Our valiant Mason was commissioned ;  
(Whose name is never mentioned by me,  
Without a special note of dignity. )’

“ In granting the charter, Charles speaks thus :

‘ Chief in the patent, Winthrop, thou shalt stand,  
And valiant Mason place at thy next hand. ’ ”

year you were pleased, in one of your lines to me, to tell me that you longed to see my face once more before you died. I embraced your love, though I feared my old lame bones, and yours, had arrested travelling in this world, and therefore I was and am ready to lay hold on all occasions of writing, as I do at present.

“The occasion, I confess, is sorrowful, because I see yourselves, with others, embarked in a resolution to invade and despoil your poor countrymen, in a wilderness, and your ancient friends, of our temporal and soul liberties.

“It is sorrowful, also, because mine eye beholds a black and doleful train of grievous, and, I fear, bloody consequences, at the heel of this business, both to you and us. The Lord is righteous in all our afflictions, that is a maxim; the Lord is gracious to all oppressed, that is another; he is most gracious to the soul that cries and waits on him: that is silver, tried in the fire seven times.

“Sir, I am not out of hopes, but that while your aged eyes and mine are yet in their orbs, and not yet sunk down into their holes of rottenness, we shall leave our friends and countrymen, our children and relations, and this land, in peace, behind us. To this end, Sir, please you with a calm and steady and a Christian hand, to hold the balance and to weigh these few considerations, in much love and due respect presented:

“First. When I was unkindly and unchristianly,



as I believe, driven from my house and land and wife and children, (in the midst of a New England winter, now about thirty-five years past,) at Salem, that ever-honored Governor, Mr. Winthrop, privately wrote to me to steer my course to the Narraganset Bay and Indians, for many high and heavenly and public ends, encouraging me, from the freeness of the place from any English claims or patents. I took his prudent motion as a hint and voice from God, and waving all other thoughts and motions, I steered my course from Salem (though in winter snow, which I feel yet) unto these parts, wherein I may say Peniel, that is, I have seen the face of God.

“Second. I first pitched, and begun to build and plant at Seekonk, now Rehoboth, but I received a letter from my ancient friend, Mr. Winslow, then Governor of Plymouth, professing his own and others’ love and respect to me, yet lovingly advising me, since I was fallen into the edge of their bounds, and they were loth to displease the Bay, to remove but to the other side of the water, and then, he said, I had the country free before me, and might be as free as themselves, and we should be loving neighbors together. These were the joint understandings of these two eminently wise and Christian Governors and others, in their day, together with their counsel and advice as to the freedom and vacancy of this place, which in this respect, and many other Providences of the Most Holy and Only Wise, I called *Providence*.

“Third. Sometime after, the Plymouth great sachem, (Ousamaquin\*) upon occasion, affirming that Providence was his land, and therefore Plymouth’s land, and some resenting it, the then prudent and godly Governor, Mr. Bradford, and others of his godly council, answered, that if, after due examination, it should be found true what the barbarian said, yet having, to my loss of a harvest that year, been now (though by their gentle advice) as good as banished from Plymouth as from the Massachusetts, and I had quietly and patiently departed from them, at their motion, to the place where now I was, I should not be molested and tossed up and down again, while they had breath in their bodies; and surely, between those, my friends of the Bay and Plymouth, I was sorely tossed, for one fourteen weeks, in a bitter winter season, not knowing what bread or bed did mean, beside the yearly loss of no small matter in my trading with English and natives, being debarred from Boston, the chief mart and port of New England. God knows that many thousand pounds cannot repay the very temporary losses I have sustained. It lies upon the Massachusetts and me, yea, and other colonies joining with them, to examine, with fear and trembling, before the eyes of flaming fire, the true cause of all my sorrows and sufferings. It pleased the Father of spirits to touch many hearts, dear to him, with some

---

\* Commonly called Massassoit.

relentings; amongst which, that great and pious soul, Mr. Winslow, melted, and kindly visited me, at Providence, and put a piece of gold into the hands of my wife, for our supply.

“Fourth. When, the next year after my banishment, the Lord drew the bow of the Pequod war against the country, in which, Sir, the Lord made yourself, with others, a blessed instrument of peace to all New England, I had my share of service to the whole land in that Pequod business, inferior to very few that acted, for,

“1. Upon letters received from the Governor and Council at Boston, requesting me to use my utmost and speediest endeavors to break and hinder the league labored for by the Pequods against the Mohegans, and Pequods against the English, (excusing the not sending of company and supplies, by the haste of the business,) the Lord helped me immediately to put my life into my hand, and, scarce acquainting my wife, to ship myself, all alone, in a poor canoe, and to cut through a stormy wind, with great seas, every minute in hazard of life, to the sachem’s house.

“2. Three days and nights my business forced me to lodge and mix with the bloody Pequod ambassadors, whose hands and arms, methought, wreaked with the blood of my countrymen, murdered and massacred by them on Connecticut river, and from whom I could not but nightly look for their bloody knives at my own throat also.

“3. When God wondrously preserved me, and helped me to break to pieces the Pequod’s negotiation and design, and to make, and promote and finish, by many travels and charges, the English league with the Narragansets and Mohegans against the Pequods, and that the English forces marched up to the Narraganset country against the Pequods, I gladly entertained, at my house in Providence, the General Stoughton and his officers, and used my utmost care that all his officers and soldiers should be well accommodated with us.

“4. I marched up with them to the Narraganset sachems, and brought my countrymen and the barbarians, sachems and captains, to a mutual confidence and complacence, each in other.

“5. Though I was ready to have marched further, yet, upon agreement that I should keep at Providence, as an agent between the Bay and the army, I returned, and was interpreter and intelligencer, constantly receiving and sending letters to the Governor and Council at Boston, &c., in which work I judge it no impertinent digression to recite (out of the many scores of letters, at times, from Mr. Winthrop,) this one pious and heavenly prophecy, touching all New England, of that gallant man, viz.: ‘If the Lord turn away his face from our sins, and bless our endeavors and yours, at this time, against our bloody enemy, we and our children shall long enjoy peace, in this, our wilderness condition.’ And himself and some other of

the Council motioned, and it was debated, whether or no I had not merited, not only to be recalled from banishment, but also to be honored with some remark of favor. It is known who hindered, who never promoted the liberty of other men's consciences. These things, and ten times more, I could relate, to show that I am not a stranger to the Pequod wars and lands, and possibly not far from the merit of a foot of land in either country, which I have not.

“5. Considering (upon frequent exceptions against Providence men) that we had no authority for civil government, I went purposely to England, and upon my report and petition, the Parliament granted us a charter of government for these parts, so judged vacant on all hands. And upon this, the country about us was more friendly, and wrote to us, and treated us as an authorized colony; only the difference of our consciences much obstructed. The bounds of this, our first charter, I (having ocular knowledge of persons, places and transactions) did honestly and conscientiously, as in the holy presence of God, draw up from Pawcatuck river, which I then believed, and still do, is free from all English claims and conquests; for although there were some Pequods on this side the river, who, by reason of some sachems' marriages with some on this side, lived in a kind of neutrality with both sides, yet, upon the breaking out of the war, they relinquished their land to the possession of their enemies, the Narragansetts and Nianticks, and their

land never came into the condition of the lands on the other side, which the English, by conquest, challenged; so that I must still affirm, as in God's holy presence, I tenderly waved to touch a foot of land in which I knew the Pequod wars were maintained and were properly Pequod, being a gallant country; and from Pawcatuck river hitherward, being but a patch of ground, full of troublesome inhabitants, I did, as I judged, inoffensively, draw our poor and inconsiderable line.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ 10. Alas! Sir, in calm midnight thoughts, what are these leaves and flowers, and smoke and shadows, and dreams of earthly nothings, about which we poor fools and children, as David saith, disquiet ourselves in vain? Alas! what is all the scuffling of this world for, but, *come, will you smoke it?* What are all the contentions and wars of this world about, generally, but for greater dishes and bowls of porridge, of which, if we believe God's Spirit in Scripture, Esau and Jacob were types? Esau will part with the heavenly birthright for his supping, after his hunting, for god belly; and Jacob will part with his porridge for an eternal inheritance. O Lord, give me to make Jacob's and Mary's choice, which shall never be taken from me.

“ 11. How much sweeter is the counsel of the Son of God, to mind first the matters of his kingdom; to take no care for to-morrow; to pluck out, cut off and

fling away right eyes, hands and feet, rather than to be cast whole into hell-fire; to consider the ravens and the lilies whom a heavenly Father so clothes and feeds; and the counsel of his servant Paul, to roll our cares, for this life also, upon the most high Lord, steward of his people, the eternal God; to be content with food and raiment: to mind not our own, but every man the things of another; yea, and to suffer wrong, and part with what we judge is right, yea, our lives and (as poor women martyrs have said) as many as there be hairs upon our heads, for the name of God and the son of God his sake. This is humanity, yea this is Christianity. The rest is but formality and picture, courteous idolatry and Jewish and Popish blasphemy against the Christian religion, the Father of spirits and his Son, the Lord Jesus. Besides, Sir, the matter with us is not about these children's toys of land, meadows, cattle, government, &c. But here, all over this colony, a great number of weak and distressed souls, scattered, are flying hither from Old and New England, the Most High and Only Wise hath, in his infinite wisdom, provided this country and this corner as a shelter for the poor and persecuted, according to their several persuasions. And thus that heavenly man, Mr. Haynes, Governor of Connecticut, though he pronounced the sentence of my long banishment against me, at Cambridge, then Newtown, yet said unto me, in his own house at Hartford, being then in some difference with the



Bay : " I think, Mr. Williams, I must now confess to you, that the most wise God hath provided and cut out this part of his world for a refuge and receptacle for all sorts of consciences. I am now under a cloud, and my brother Hooker, with the Bay, as you have been, we have removed from them thus far, and yet they are not satisfied."

" Thus, Sir, the King's Majesty, though his father's and his own conscience favored Lord Bishops, which their father and grandfather King James, whom I have spoke with, sore against his will, also did, yet all the world may see, by his Majesty's declarations and engagements before his return, and his declarations and Parliament speeches since, and many suitable actings, how the Father of spirits hath mightily impressed and touched his royal spirit, though the Bishops much disturbed him, with deep inclination of favor and gentleness to different consciences and apprehensions as to the invisible King and way of his worship. Hence he hath vouchsafed his royal promise under his hand and broad seal, that no person in this colony shall be molested or questioned for the matters of his conscience to God, so he be loyal and keep the civil peace. Sir, we must part with lands and lives before we part with such a jewel. I judge you may yield some land and the government of it to us, and we, for peace sake, the like to you, as being but subjects to one king, &c. and I think the King's Majesty would thank us, for many reasons. But to



part with this jewel, we may as soon do it as the Jews with the favor of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes. Yourselves pretend liberty of conscience, but alas! it is but self, the great god self, only to yourselves. The King's Majesty winks at Barbadoes, where Jews and all sorts of Christian and Antichristian persuasions are free, but our grant, some few weeks after yours sealed, though granted as soon, if not before yours, is crowned with the King's extraordinary favor to this colony, as being a banished one, in which his Majesty declared himself that he would experiment, whether civil government could consist with such liberty of conscience. This his Majesty's grant was startled at by his Majesty's high officers of state, who were to view it in course before the sealing, but fearing the lion's roaring, they couched, against their wills, in obedience to his Majesty's pleasure.

“Some of yours, as I heard lately, told tales to the Archbishop of Canterbury, viz. that we are a profane people, and do not keep the Sabbath, but some do plough, &c. But, first, you told him not how we suffer freely all other persuasions, yea the common prayer, which yourselves will not suffer. If you say you will, you confess you must suffer more, as we do.

“2. You know this is but a color to your design, for, first, you know that all England itself (after the formality and superstition of morning and evening prayer) play away their Sabbath. 2d. You know

yourselves do not keep the Sabbath, that is the seventh day, &c.

“3. You know that famous Calvin and thousands more held it but ceremonial and figurative, from Colossians 2, &c. and vanished; and that the day of worship was alterable at the churches’ pleasure. Thus also all the Romanists confess, saying, viz, that there is no express scripture, first, for infants’ baptisms; nor, second, for abolishing the seventh day, and instituting of the eighth day worship, but that it is at the churches’ pleasure.

“4. You know, that generally, all this whole colony observe the first day, only here and there one out of conscience, another out of covetousness, make no conscience of it.

“5. You know the greatest part of the world make no conscience of a seventh day. The next part of the world, Turks, Jews and Christians, keep three different days, Friday, Saturday, Sunday for their Sabbath and day of worship, and every one maintains his own by the longest sword.

“5. I have offered, and do, by these presents, to discuss by disputation, writing or printing, among other points of differences, these three positions; first, that forced worship stinks in God’s nostrils. 2d. That it denies Christ Jesus yet to be come, and makes the church yet national, figurative and ceremonial. 3d. That in these flames about religion, as his Majesty, his father and grandfather have yielded, there

is no other prudent, Christian way of preserving peace in the world, but by permission of differing consciences. Accordingly, I do now offer to dispute these points and other points of difference, if you please, at Hartford, Boston and Plymouth. For the manner of the dispute and the discussion, if you think fit, one whole day each month in summer, at each place, by course, I am ready, if the Lord permit, and, as I humbly hope, assist me.

“ It is said, that you intend not to invade our spiritual or civil liberties, but only (under the advantage of first sealing your charter) to right the privateers that petition to you. It is said, also, that if you had but Mishquomacuck and Narraganset lands quietly yielded, you would stop at Coweset, &c. Oh, Sir, what do these thoughts preach, but that private cabins rule all, whatever become of the ship of common safety and religion, which is so much pretended in New England? Sir, I have heard further, and by some that say they know, that something deeper than all which hath been mentioned lies in the three colonies’ breasts and consultations. I judge it not fit to commit such matter to the trust of paper, &c. but only beseech the Father of spirits to guide our poor bewildered spirits, for his name and mercy sake.

“ 15. Whereas our case seems to be the case Paul appealing to Cæsar against the plots of his religious, zealous adversaries, I hear you pass not of our petitions and appeals to his Majesty, for partly you

think the King will not own a profane people that do not keep the Sabbath; partly you think that the King incompetent judge, but you will force him to law also, to confirm your first-born Esau, though Jacob had by the heels, and in God's holy time must carry the birthright and inheritance. I judge your surmise is a dangerous mistake, for patents, grants and charters, and such like royal favors, are not laws of England, and acts of Parliament, nor matters of propriety and *meum* and *tuum* between the King and his subjects, which, as the times have been, have been sometimes triable in inferior Courts; but such kind of grants have been like high offices in England, of high honor and ten, yea twenty thousand pounds gain per annum, yet revocable or curtable upon pleasure, according to the King's better information, or upon his Majesty's sight, or misbehavior, ingratefulness, or designs fraudulently plotted, private and distinct from him.

“16. Sir, I lament that such designs should be carried on at such a time, while we are stript and whipt, and are still under (the whole country) the dreadful rods of God, in our wheat, hay, corn, cattle, shipping, trading, bodies and lives; when, on the other side of the water, all sorts of consciences (yours and ours) are frying in the Bishops' pan and furnace; when the French and Romish Jesuits, the firebrands of the world for their god belly sake, are kindling at our back, in this country, especially with the Mo-

hawks and Mohegans, against us, of which I know and have daily information.

“ 17. If any please to say, is there no medicine for this malady? Must the nakedness of New-England, like some notorious strumpet, be prostituted to the blaspheming eyes of all nations? Must we be put to plead before his Majesty; and consequently the Lord Bishops, our common enemies, &c. I answer, the Father of mercies and God of all consolations hath graciously discovered to me, as I believe, a remedy, which, if taken, will quiet all minds, yours and ours, will keep yours and ours in quiet possession and enjoyment of their lands, which you all have so dearly bought and purchased in this barbarous country, and so long possessed amongst these wild savages; will preserve you both in the liberties and honors of your charters and governments, without the least impeachment of yielding one to another; with a strong curb also to those wild barbarians and all the barbarians of this country, without troubling of compromisers and arbitrators between you; without any delay, or long and chargeable and grievous address to our King's Majesty, whose gentle and serene soul must needs be afflicted to be troubled again with us. If you please to ask me what my prescription is, I will not put you off to Christian moderation or Christian humility, or Christian prudence, or Christian love, or Christian self-denial, or Christian contention or patience. For I design a civil, a humane and political

medicine, which, if the God of Heaven please to bless, you will find it effectual to all the ends I have proposed. Only I must crave your pardon, both parties of you, if I judge it not fit to discover it at present. I know you are both of you hot; I fear myself, also. If both desire, in a loving and calm spirit, to enjoy your rights, I promise you, with God's help, to help you to them, in a fair and sweet and easy way. My receipt will not please you all. If it should so please God to frown upon us that you should not like it, I can but humbly mourn, and say with the prophet, that which must perish must perish. And as to myself, in endeavoring after your temporal and spiritual peace, I humbly desire to say, if I perish, I perish. It is but a shadow vanished, a bubble broke, a dream finished. Eternity will pay for all.

“ Sir, I am your old and true friend and servant,

“ R. W.

“ To my honored and ancient friend, Mr. Thomas Prince, Governor of Plymouth Colony, these present. And by his honored hand this copy, sent to Connecticut, whom it most concerneth, I humbly present to the General Court of Plymouth, when next assembled.”

## NOTE D.

“*What cheer.*” This is a phrase learned by the Indians, among the whites. It was used as a friendly greeting, or salutation; as, “How do ye do?—How fare ye?” &c. With this phrase for a title, Hon. JOB DURFEE, Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of Rhode Island, published, some two years since, a poem which celebrates ROGER WILLIAMS, and some of the principal colonial events of New England, and especially of Rhode Island, in his time. It is dedicated to “Rev. ROMEO ELTON, *Professor of Languages in Brown University.*” From it, we have taken the liberty to make the following extracts; wishing that the work itself were more generally known and read.

Of Mr. Williams’s journey from Salem, after his banishment, and some subsequent incidents, the writer says:—

In boundless forests now our founder trod,  
 And South-west far his doubtful course he took;  
 The lofty pines and cedars round him nod—  
 Loud roars the tempest through the leafless oak;  
 Deep lies the snow upon the frozen sod,  
 And still the storm’s descending torrents choke  
 The Heavens above; and only fancy could,  
 So dim the view, conceive the solitude.

\* \* \* \* \*

Above his head the branches writhe and bend,  
 Or in the mingled wreck their ruin flies—  
 The storm redoubles, and the whirlwinds blend  
 The rising snow-drift with descending skies ;  
 And oft the crags a friendly shelter lend  
 His breathless bosom, and his sightless eyes ;  
 But, when the transient gust its fury spends,  
 He through the storm again upon his journey wends.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sire Williams journeyed in the forest lone ;  
 And then night's thickening shades began to fill  
 His soul with doubt—for shelter had he none—  
 And all the out-stretched waste was clad with one  
 Vast mantle hoar. And he began to hear  
 At times the fox's bark, and the fierce howl  
 Of wolf, sometimes afar—sometimes so near,  
 That in the very glen they seemed to prowl  
 Where now he, wearied, paused—and then his ear  
 Started to note some shaggy monster's growl,  
 That from his snow-clad rocky den did peer,  
 Shrunk with gaunt famine in that tempest drear,  
 And scenting human blood—yea, and so nigh,  
 Thrice did our northern tiger seem to come,  
 He thought he heard the fagots crackling by,  
 And saw, through driven snow and twilight gloom,  
 Peer from the thickets his fierce burning eye,  
 Scanning his destined prey, and through the broom,  
 Thrice stealing on his ears the whining cry  
 Swelled by degrees above the tempest high.

\* \* \* \* \*



“Father of mercies! thou the wanderer’s guide,  
 In this dire storm along the howling waste,  
 Thanks for the shelter thou dost here provide,  
 Thanks for the mercies of the day that’s past;  
 Thanks for the frugal fare thou hast supplied;  
 And Oh! may still thy tender mercies last;—  
 May the delusion of our race subside,  
 That chains man’s conscience to the ruler’s pride.

Grant that thy humble instrument still shun  
 His persecutors in their eager quest;—  
 Grant the asylum, yet to be begun,  
 To persecution’s exiles yield a rest;  
 Let ages after ages take the boon,  
 And in religious freedom still be blest—  
 Grant that I live until this task be done,  
 And then O Lord! receive me as thine own.”

Our father ceased, and with keen relish he  
 Refreshed his wearied frame in that lone dell;  
 Ah! little can his far posterity  
 Sense now the pleasures of that frugal meal;  
 For naught he knew of pampered luxury,  
 But toil and fast had done their office well,  
 And not the dainties brought o’er India’s sea,  
 Or wrung from sweat of modern slavery.

\* \* \* \* \*

Of all the monsters of the dreary wood,  
 None like the panther did the hunter fear;  
 For man and beast he fearlessly pursued—  
 Whilst others shunned he was allured by fire;  
 And Williams knew how perilous his mood,  
 And for the trying onset did prepare;  
 Still by the rising blaze he firmly stood,  
 And every dangerous avenue he viewed.

In God he trusted for deliverance—  
 He thought of Daniel in the lion's den—  
 He waited silent for the fierce advance—  
 He heard the fagots break along the glen—

\* \* \* \* \*

But at this moment from the darkness broke  
 A human voice in Narraganset's tongue;  
 "Neemat!" (my brother) in kind tone it spoke,  
 "How comes Awanux these drear wilds among?"  
 And at the accents the dark thickets shook,  
 And from them lightly the red hunter sprung,  
 And from his belt familiarly he took,  
 And fired his calumet, and curled its smoke.

Then to our founder passed the simple cheer,  
 In sign of friendship to a wandering man,  
 "Let not," he said, "my brother quake with fear,  
 "'T was Waban's cry at which the monsters ran."

\* \* \* \* \*

"'T were hard to tell my brother of the woods,  
 What cause has forced his pale-faced brother here,  
 The red and white men have their different modes,  
 And scant is Narraganset's tongue I fear,  
 In fitting terms to teach my brother's ear,  
 The themes of strife among white multitudes—  
 Themes yet unknown within these forests drear,  
 Where undisturbed ye worship various gods,  
 And persecution leave to white abodes.

The letter of Mr. Williams, written to his wife,  
 from Seekonk, is thus described:—

'T was on the inner bark stript from the pine,  
 Our father penciled this epistle rare ;  
 Two blazing pine knots did his torches shine,  
 His desk a pallet, and a mat his chair :  
 He wrote his spouse the brief familiar line,  
 How he had journeyed, and his roof now where ;  
 And that poor Waban was his host benign,  
 And bade her cheer and give him blankets fine.

Then bade her send the Indian presents bought,  
 When first they suffered persecution's thrall—  
 The strings of Wampum, and the scarlet coat,  
 The tinselled belt and jewel coronal ;  
 His pocket Bible, which his haste forgot,  
 For he had cheering hopes of Waban's soul ;  
 Then gave her solace to the bad unknown,  
 That God o'errules and still protects his own.

After the chief, Awanax, had related to Mr. Williams, the white men's demands for lands, and the manner in which he had satisfied them, the poet gives the following graphic sketch of the supposed conversation :—

“ Brother I know that all these lands are thine—  
 These rolling rivers and these waving trees,—  
 From the Great Spirit came the gift divine ;  
 And who would trespass upon grants like these ?  
 Naught would I take, e'en if the power were mine,  
 Of all thy lands, lest it should Him displease ;  
 But for just meed should thou some part resign,  
 Would the Great spirit blame the deed benign ? ”

“ 'T is not the peag,” said the sagamore,  
 “ Nor knives, nor guns, nor garments red as blood,

That buy the lands I hold dominion o'er—

Lands that were fashioned by the red man's God ;  
But to my friend I give, and take no more

Than to his generous bosom may seem good ;  
But still we pass the belt, and for the lands,  
He strengthens mine, and strengthen I his hands."

Having carried his hero through various vicissitudes, and introduced his readers to many wild and savage scenes, the poet proceeds:—

Who on the prostrate trunk has risen now,

And does with cleaving steel the blows renew ?

Broad is the beaver of his manly brow,

His mantle gray, his hozen azure blue ;

His feet are dripping with dissolving snow ;

His garments sated with the morning dew ;

His nerves seem strengthened with the labor past ;—

His visage hardened by the winter's blast.

Though changed by sufferings, 't is our founder yet ;

There does he hope, and labor, but in vain,

On free opinion's base to build a State,

Where reason aye shall spurn the tyrant's chain ;

But, ah ! unhappy man ! the bigot's hate,

Will still, I fear, thy lofty soul restrain :

Will rob thee even of an exile's home,

And leave thee still in savage wilds to roam.

Hard by yon little fountain, clear and sheen,

Whose swollen streamlet murmurs down the glade,

Where groves of hemlocks and of cedars green,

Stand 'gainst the northern storm a barricade,

Springs the first mansion of his rude demesne,

A slender wigwam by red Waban made :

Such is sire Williams' shelter from the blast,  
And there his rest when daily toils are past.

Yet seldom from the storm he shrinks away,  
With his own hands he 's laboring to rear  
A mansion, where his wife and children may,  
In happier days, partake the social cheer;  
Where no sour bigot may in wrath essay  
To make the free-born spirit quail with fear,  
At threat of scourge, of banishment and death,  
For the free thought—the soul's sustaining breath.

\* \* \* \* \*

Boast of your swords, ye blood-stained conquerors—boast  
The free-born millions ye have made your slaves;  
Exult o'er fields where liberty was lost,  
And patriots fell—where lingering o'er their graves,  
A nation's memory, like a vengeful ghost,  
Broods never slumbering, and forever raves  
Of crimes unanswered—till the gathered wrath  
Of ages bursts on your ensanguined path—

And where are ye? some remnant left behind,  
Some sculptured marble, or decaying fane,  
May shew where once ye triumphed mad and blind,  
Shew but for genius ye had fought in vain;  
Then look to him whose quiet toils unbind  
The bonds which bigots gave you to enchain  
Man's angel spirit to some demon's will,  
And at your guilty deeds, blush and be still.

Mr. Durfee thus introduces the interview of Mr. Williams with Waban, whom he was about to despatch to Salem for his wife and children:—

“ But, Waban, I have now a task for thee—  
 Think not of him, be thy attention here—  
 Whilst the snows covered earth, and ice the sea,  
 I left my consort and my children dear ;  
 ’T was stormy night—the hunter sheltered me ;  
 And in his lodge he gave abundant cheer ;  
 Then to the rising sun he cheerly sped,  
 And saw ’mong faces pale the wanderer’s shed.

“ There too he saw his little children play,  
 And the white hand which gave the blanket red,  
 But now far distant seems that gloomy day,  
 When from their presence thy white sachem fled ;  
 The lodge is built—the garden smiling gay—  
 Will the swift foot once more the forest thread,  
 And guide the children and the snow-white hand,  
 Along the howling wilds to this far distant land ? ”

Waban replied, the nimble foot will go—  
 But a gaunt wolf may haunt the hunter’s way,  
 And he will sharp his darts, and string his bow,  
 And gird his loins as for the battle fray ;  
 The Priest of Chepian ne’er forgets a foe—  
 His vengeance lasts until a bloody day  
 Shall feed the crows, or still a bloodier night  
 Give the gaunt wolf a banquet ere ’t is light.

“ God is our trust ! ” our pious founder said,  
 “ Arm, and go forth confiding in his might—  
 Far as a banished exile’s foot dare tread,  
 On ground forbidden, will thy sachem white  
 Journey to meet thee. When the sun has shed  
 Five times from orient skies his flaming light,  
 Williams will meet his spouse and children dear,  
 Hid in brown shades forbidden Salem near.

On the return of Waban, with Mrs. Williams and her children, he is met by Mr. Williams; and the scene is thus described:—

But ere he gained the destined point, or viewed  
 The fell assassin, the dry fagots' crash,  
 The waving coppice, and re-echoing wood,  
 And sounding foot-falls, down the lawns that dash,  
 Told him how vainly he his foe pursued,  
 Or that pursuit were dangerously rash;  
 Then turning slowly, he retraced his track,  
 As his foiled leap the lion measures back.

The matron, trembling, viewed the passing scene;  
 For she had marked that hostile arrow's flight,  
 And Williams' glance, and Waban's ireful mien,  
 Told her what dangers did their fears excite;  
 No frantic shrieks the mother's acts demean;  
 A mother's cares did every thought invite;  
 And o'er the little fountains of our blood,  
 She stretched her arms' frail shield, and trembling stood.

Though with more calmness, yet with equal dread,  
 The anxious father viewed the threatening harm;  
 And, under God, what was there now to aid  
 Save his own firmness and red Waban's arm?  
 Behind—before—a dreary forest spread—  
 Far off Neponset—here the dire alarm  
 Of lurking savage—whilst the gathering night  
 Still added horror to a doubtful flight.

He paused one moment, and his means forlorn  
 To guard his onward march he thus arrayed:  
 The palfreys shielded by the burdens borne,  
 Each side the moving group, were slowly led;

This reigned by him, that by his eldest born,  
 Whilst nimble Waban scoured the threatening shade—  
 On every side the watchful hunter ran ;  
 Now fenced their flanks—now pioneered their van.

They proceeded unharmed.

The reception of Williams and family, at the now  
 city of Providence, is thus portrayed :—

“ Waban,” said Williams, “ we may venture now,  
 But pause ye short of the sure arrow’s flight ;”  
 Instant the red man drove the foaming prow  
 Along the cleaving flood, and, at the sight  
 Of the red multitudes, the rose’s glow  
 Fading, at once, left Mary’s cheek all white ;  
 And sudden fears her children’s breasts surprise,  
 And, with their little hands, they trembling veil their eyes.

Full in the front of that vast multitude,  
 Within an arrow’s flight, their skiff they stayed ;  
 A sudden silence hushed the listening wood ;  
 The crowds all paused, and with wild eyes surveyed  
 The pale-faced group—which in like stillness viewed  
 The wondering throngs.—At length the woodland glade  
 Moves with their numbers—down the banks they pour,  
 Swarming and gathering on the dark’ning shore.

As when some urchin, with a heedless blow,  
 The insect nations of the hive alarms ;  
 Down from their cells the watchful myriads flow,  
 And earth and air rolls black with murmuring swarms ;  
 So from the woods the wondering warriors go,  
 So o’er the dark’ning strand their number forms ;  
 None save their haughty chiefs remain behind,  
 And they the lofty banks and forest margin lined



Then silence reigned again—but still they stared,—  
 Some clasped their knives and some their arrows drew;  
 Then from his seat his form our Founder reared,  
 Beneath him rocking rolled the frail canoe;  
 His hand he raised, and manly forehead bared,  
 And straight their former friend the sachems knew;  
 Netop, What cheer! broke on the listening air;  
 What cheer! What cheer! was echoed here and there.

And straight the kindling crowds burst on his ear,  
 Their shouts embodied sought the joyous sky,  
 With open arms, and greeting of What cheer,  
 Lived all the shores, and banks, and summits high;  
 What cheer! What cheer! resounded far and near,  
 What cheer! What cheer! the hollow woods reply;  
 What cheer! What cheer! swells the exulting gales,  
 Sweeps o'er the laughing hills, and trembles through the  
 vales.

\* \* \* \* \*

Miantonomi, stepping from the crowd,  
 Stretched forth his brawny hand, and cried "What  
 cheer!  
 Welcome, my brother! say, what lowering cloud,  
 O'er Seekonk's eastern marge, impels thee here;  
 Be it Pequot in his numbers proud,  
 I hold his greeting in this glittering spear;  
 But, oh! perchance my brother seeks this place,  
 To share with us the sacred rites of peace."

"Not so, brave chief.—It is to seek a home,  
 By seer announced, by Heaven to me assigned;  
 Yonder abode lies wrapt in sable gloom,  
 Sprung not from Pequot, but the Plymouth kind;

My promised harvest blighted in the bloom,  
 My voiceless roof—all, all have I resigned,  
 And hither come to seek Mooshausick's plain,  
 And beg the gift once proffered me in vain."

\* \* \* \* \*

Here grave Canonicus came from the throng—  
 "Welcome, my son!" exclaimed the aged chief,  
 "Bear thou the inflictions of thy kindred's wrong,  
 Like a brave man, not with a woman's grief;  
 The lands thou seest shall all to thee belong;  
 And for thy comforts lost, a moment brief  
 Shall e'en their loss repair—o'er yonder height  
 Is the domain where Chepian ruled of late.

---

#### NOTE E.

Of all the various employments in which the writer, or any man was ever engaged, (whose nerves were not made of iron, and forehead of brass) begging money is the most irksome. To raise the requisite sum therefore, which was necessary to discharge the debt standing against the Roger Williams Church, we had resort to a series of scientific and historical lectures. Those gentlemen who were so generous as to *give* their services, created a profit in the sale of tickets. Besides a number of the clergy of Providence, who lectured gratuitously in this series, there were also the Hon. Tristram Burges, Hon. Job Durfee and others,

whose kindness will not soon be forgotten. The Hon. J. S. Buckingham, late member of the British Parliament, now giving lectures in this country descriptive of the eastern world, through which he has travelled, gave the last of what were called the "Roger Williams lectures." The avails of this lecture, placed more than one hundred dollars in the funds of that society.

As we have occasion to mention the name of this gentleman, we cannot consent to leave it without further notice. We do not even hope to see Mr. Buckingham, or any other man who is laboring to benefit his race, occupy the *unenviable* position, where all men will speak well of him. But we do hope to see due courtesy and respect manifested to one coming, as this gentleman does, to gratify us with so much that is interesting; acquired at such great expense and labor, from the land of the scriptures.

Having elevated himself from the occupation of an humble sailor boy, to a rank which places him on a level with the scholars and legislators of his age, he has distinguished himself by repeated acts, each of which will tell on the interests of the world down to the latest generation. Among these may be mentioned the abolishment of the East India monopoly, which removes all obstruction out of the way to free intercourse between Christian and idolatrous nations; the suppression of burning alive the widows! and the revenue derived from idolatry, which has long been

such an insuperable barrier in the way of missionary labor in Hindostan, with many other modifications and improvements in the East India government. After having given an impetus to the temperance reformation, that no other man in Europe ever had done, by introducing the subject to the investigation of Parliament, which resulted, amid the scoffs and sneers of many of the members, in triumphant success to this work of humanity, throughout Great Britain. He then turned his attention to the suppression of what he deemed cruel and wrong in the laws and usages of his own native England—such as impressment and flogging in the navy and army, and many other objects of the kind, which raised an imperishable monument to his memory, as a virtuous and humane legislator.

Laboring in this department so long as he thought duty required, to the grief of his grateful constituents for services done, he resigned his seat in Parliament, and is now travelling among us, to learn our history, and study our manners. Thus, having made himself familiar with almost the whole accessible part of the Eastern Hemisphere, he has come to the new world, from which, if his life be spared, he will doubtless make up another chapter of his useful observations; and which we shall, no doubt, feel a great pleasure to read as most people have done, whatever comes from his prolific pen. His whole course of procedure since he has been among us, has been in keeping with his

true character—a gentleman, and we trust, a Christian. To the solicitations of the managers of the various benevolent institutions with us, his ear is never deaf. The gratuitous services which he has thus rendered, has not added hundreds only, but thousands of dollars to the funds of these societies—saying nothing of his private donations. Yet lo! it is left for an humble New England man to make the discovery that Mr. Buckingham is a “humbug.” Strange that the intelligence of England, Ireland and Scotland, in most of whose cities and towns these same lectures have been given, had not, ere this time, made such a discovery. And stranger still, that one of the most populous towns of England, should have returned him over popular competitors, humbug as he may be, six successive terms to a seat in Parliament!

But great as the discovery is, which our own yankee is making, (for the discovery is now going on) we venture to predict that if Divine Providence shall spare his life to complete his present design, the youth who have chanced to attend his lectures, will be proud to say, that they have seen and heard the Hon. J. S. BUCKINGHAM.

If these remarks shall subject us to the imputation of enthusiasm for the man, we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that our attachment is not misplaced—for it is to the man whose future history will show that in him has lived another benefactor of his race.

When Mr. B. visited Providence, he gave lectures every evening of one week for the purpose of obtaining two evenings of his brief visit to lecture on temperance. At the close of the last temperance meeting, the following resolutions were offered by a member of the city society, and carried by acclamation.

*Resolved*, That the friends of temperance in this city, hereby tender to Mr. Buckingham their sincere and hearty thanks for his eloquent and instructive discourses, imparting (as they do) the experience of one, who under the vicissitudes of almost every climate, and in a great variety of situations has realized the practical advantages of temperance.

*Resolved*, That he more especially deserves the thanks of this society for his consistent example of total abstinence, which we confidently believe will produce beneficial results on the higher and more fashionable classes, by teaching them that social intercourse needs not the aid of alcohol to render it pleasurable.

Also, the following resolutions were presented each in their proper place.

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of this meeting, that the lectures on Egypt and Palestine, as delivered by the Hon. J. S. Buckingham, in this city, have been productive of much valuable information, and great pleasure to the audience, that we have been highly gratified with the happy manner in which they have been delivered, and that we believe them worthy of patronage by all lovers of useful knowledge.

*Resolved*, That in behalf of the Roger Williams' Church and Society in this city, we, the undersigned feel it our duty thus publicly to express our gratitude

to the Honorable Mr. Buckingham for his beneficence in giving the avails of his last Oriental Lecture in this place, for the benefit of their funds.

ARTHUR CAVERNO, *Pastor*.

BENAJAH WILLIAMS, JR., *Deacon*.

*City of Providence, Dec. 7, 1838.*

In our correspondence with Mr. Buckingham we had occasion to give some account of the FOUNDER of the church, whose funds he was solicited to aid, and also of our design to publish this little book. It was on this occasion he wrote the following letter which we are at liberty to publish.

NEW BEDFORD, (MASS.) DEC. 15, 1838.

REV. L. D. JOHNSON :

*Dear Sir :* I rejoice to hear from you, that you are about to publish a memorial of the founder of Providence, and the great champion and martyr of religious liberty, ROGER WILLIAMS, in connection with the history of the church still bearing his name, over which, as pastor; it must give you great pleasure to have presided.

In communicating to me, as you have done, the resolutions of thanks passed by the "Roger Williams Society," and tendered to me for the aid afforded to the funds of their church, by the receipts of the lecture on Palestine, which I gave for its benefit, at the close of my regular course to the public of Providence, you have afforded me much pleasure: as I shall always recur with satisfaction to the period,

when your urgent and pressing invitation first led me to resolve on visiting your interesting city: and always remember with delight, the cordial hospitality and friendly intercourse which I enjoyed, with my family, at the hands of many of its most distinguished citizens. But, above all, I shall ever feel proud at the association of my humble name with any labors in connection with the beloved and venerated name of Roger Williams, and in aid of the cause which he lived and died to promote—the cause of genuine religion, purified from the dross of human authority and human corruptions, drawn from the clear fountain of the gospel, and sending its streams, freely, to the heart of every human being who thirsts after its waters, and who may come and drink deeply, without money and without price.

That the city of Providence may long continue to shed a hallowed influence over the Christian world, by the bright example of its bold and uncompromising founder, until religious liberty shall spread its heaven-born principles over the whole earth: and that you may be individually blessed in your disinterested labors to promote the cause of temperance and piety, in which you have so long been engaged, is the sincere and earnest prayer of, dear sir,

Your faithful friend,

J. S. BUCKINGHAM.





22  
P.C.











